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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [SR](#) [KV](#)
SUBJECT: SERBIA CONTINUES TO OPPOSE U.S. DEPUTY FOR UNMIK

REF: BELGRADE 964

Classified By: DCM Jennifer Brush; reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Serbia opposes the appointment of an American as SRSG Lambert Zannier's deputy on the grounds that the top two UNMIK positions should not be filled by states that have recognized Kosovo. A top Foreign Ministry advisor suggested that Serbia would drop its opposition if the UN Security Council took action to "legitimize" EULEX, however. Serbia apparently remains convinced that Russia will expend its own political capital to achieve a UNSC decision blessing EULEX's mission in Kosovo. End summary.

Recognizers and Non-Recognizers

¶2. (C) Damjan Krnjevic Miskovic, a senior advisor to Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic, told us on September 15 that Serbia opposed the appointment of an American as Lambert Zannier's PDSRSG (Principal Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General) in UNMIK. Serbia believed that the situation had changed significantly since the 1999 agreement reserving the SRSG slot for a European and the PDSRSG slot for an American; in the new context, Miskovic said, Serbia felt "the deck was stacked" by having the top two UNMIK positions filled by states that had recognized Kosovo, and two of the top three positions held by Americans. Miskovic claimed that Russia had reached agreement with UNSYG Ban that if the SRSG came from a recognizer, the PDSRSG would come from a non-recognizer.

¶3. (C) We stressed the importance of retaining a U.S. PDSRSG, noting that Serbia's sudden opposition to the appointment ran counter to the message of constructive engagement that we have been hearing from President Tadic and FM Jeremic. In response, Miskovic argued that Serbia's position was one of principle and was not a bilateral issue. He added that if the UN Security Council took action to "legitimize" the EULEX mission before the new PDSRSG arrived, Serbia might revisit the citizenship question. Miskovic said that Serbia's objections had nothing to do with the individual merit of the U.S. candidate, although their opinion of the previous incumbent colored their thinking.

Serbia Still Counts on Russia

¶4. (C) In response to our observation that UNSC action was both unnecessary and unachievable, Miskovic said that the Serbian government had engaged the Russian government on the UNSC question, "both before and after Georgia," and remained fully confident that a UNSC presidency statement on EULEX was an achievable goal. "Russia will not be more Serbian than the Serbs on this," Miskovic stressed, adding that Serbia would immediately inform the United States if their confidence in the Russian position was shaken for any reason.

15. (SBU) Turning to Zannier's September 12 visit to Belgrade (reftel), Miskovic said talks on the judiciary and the police had been productive. "We will give everything we've got" to reach agreement on all six points highlighted in UNSYG Ban's letter before UNSC action on EULEX, Miskovic said. He asked for continued U.S. help in "alleviating misunderstandings" in Pristina regarding the dialogue with Zannier.

Comment

16. (C) Post will continue to press the Serbian government on the PDSRSG issue, underscoring the contradiction between this effort to exclude the United States from the leadership of UNMIK and Tadic and Jeremic's purported commitment to a constructive approach on Kosovo. It appears that a full-court press -- in Belgrade, Washington, and New York -- will be necessary to divide Serbia from Russia on this, given the Serbs' continued belief that UNSC action on EULEX is possible. End comment.
MUNTER